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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR, INCLUDING THE PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

Note verbale dated 17 April 1975 from the Permanent Mission of Chile
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit to him, attached to this communication, the statement made by Mrs. Lucía Hiriart de Pinochet, First Lady of Chile, at the inaugural ceremony held on 4 April 1975 for national activities in connexion with the International Women's Year.

The Permanent Mission of Chile would be grateful if the Secretary-General would have this statement circulated as an official General Assembly document on item 77 of the preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional programme of the thirtieth regular session and to bring it to the attention of the World Conference of the International Women's Year.

* A/10000.

ANNEX

Statement made by Mrs. Lucía Hiriart de Pinochet, First Lady of Chile, at the inaugural ceremony for national activities in connexion with the "International Women's Year"

Santiago, Chile, 4 April 1975

As our country inaugurates its celebration of the International Women's Year, we must analyse our position under the laws in force as well as the place occupied by Chilean women in society at the present time.

Such an analysis should provide an occasion to review the progress which our women have made towards intellectual and spiritual freedom without overstepping the bounds of their natural femininity as women. The path has been a long and difficult one but many stages have already been completed.

Intellectual freedom has naturally led to greater access for women to the country's economic resources and the progress achieved in the realm of the spirit has likewise been very apparent: prospects have been opened up which were previously closed by psychological and social prejudices and taboos relegating women to a standard social status that detracted from their dignity and failed to do justice to their gifts of intelligence, equanimity and spiritual equilibrium.

Men and women have intrinsic values which they cannot change because they constitute the nucleus of their *raison d'être*. What is important is that when both offer these values to society, they should be assessed by the same criteria without discrimination belittling to women in the tasks which fall to them.

The marked position of superiority of men over women in Chilean society stems from ideas rooted in the dawn of our history when men determined the evolution of the new country, which was then in embryo.

The Spanish warrior and the indigenous warrior fought for supremacy on the battlefields, leaving their women behind them engaged in domestic activities which were also an indispensable part of the development of that embryonic society.

When the man returned to his normal life he was welcomed as a hero, the most important figure in the group of human beings to which he belonged.

This concept underwent many changes; women gradually undertook new responsibilities and kinds of work, but that did not enable them to escape from the secondary role which they had for years allowed to be imposed on them.

Women must give thought to these matters and avoid indulging their sons, thus turning them into selfish men who cannot give free expression to their sentiments without feeling that their masculinity is impaired.

Women must counteract this atavism and learn to view the sexes from a more modern standpoint, treating men as their intellectual equals. Men should therefore co-operate with women in the smaller tasks of everyday life so that the weight of responsibility in society does not fall upon women alone.

The time when brute force, cunning in hunting or warlike bravery were the conditions which enabled a society to survive has passed into history.

The importance of training women at all cultural levels, elevating them within their own environment and ensuring that they are better prepared to assume the responsibilities of work of a broader scope should be one of our major postulates in the International Women's Year.

Our women, thanks to their tenacity combined with their clear-sighted and responsible intelligence, have excelled in many professions which were traditionally considered to be the prerogative of the male.

In carrying out the tasks assigned to them, women have the preconceived idea that, being women, they are inferior. This is what is holding women back; in advanced studies, and even in simpler work or studies, they are conscious of the fact that they will receive less recognition than men under equal conditions.

These are obstacles which must be eradicated from our society.

Women must claim their rights with the same intensity as that with which they have fulfilled their duties, restoring in the soul of the Chilean people their role as mothers, the feeling of nationality and faith in the future of our country.

As to men, they must see women as their intellectual equals, but never as their adversaries.

Chilean women have always been a decisive factor in the fight against oppression and fiercely opposed the advance of alien ideas which endangered freedom and the future of their children. They were also the first to dedicate their efforts, nobly and voluntarily, to the service of their fatherland.

The International Women's Year should be considered as the first step in a true and worthy evolution of womankind in present-day society. It is not merely a matter of dedicating a year to raising all kinds of issues; rather it should be dedicated to reviving dormant initiatives and formulating guidelines for the advancement of women in the world.

The fact that a special year is dedicated to the detailed study of subjects which are particularly important for women at the national and international levels does not mean that those subjects should subsequently be ignored.

We are confident that all that has been advocated will produce the desired results and that the woman of the future will realize her full potential and be able to make the maximum use of her abilities.

This year, which the United Nations has proclaimed ours, is a year which should, for Chilean women, be focused on an analysis and review of values. It should in no way be viewed as a conflict between the feminine and masculine elements, but should rather be made the occasion for studying the areas where those elements clash or, perhaps, never manage to meet.

It is a year that we hope will be positive, used to study negative aspects so as to reach conclusions which may clarify future prospects. Those prospects are becoming daily broader and we must therefore be fully prepared, developing to the full our natural capacities, such as courage and wisdom, so as to overcome the crises which periodically face the world and to prevent the wasting of spiritual values which destroys the established norms of life; so as to achieve the moral strength which makes us enemies of wars and armed conflicts; so as to enable ourselves to accept austerity in our conduct when necessary. This natural gift is part of the sensitivity which enables us to raise forgotten groups of people from their state of neglect; which causes us to rebel against injustice; which makes us tender and gentle with children, kind and patient with old people, distressed and sad when faced with the suffering of others.

It is all these values inherent in our condition as women which constitute our powerful domain and we should try to make them the basis for further progress.

We should like to add to the United Nations motto for the International Women's Year, namely peace, equality and development, the word generosity, which embodies the spirit inspiring Chilean women today.

Peace for us has a profound significance. We have it and we can feel it. We are horrified by the realization that it does not exist in other places; we lost it, but today we have regained it and we fervently hope that the rest of the world may have it.

We are fighting for equality of the sexes, but that does not mean we wish to stir up antagonism; all we seek is a free and happy integration. To that end, we are studying the laws and the standards to apply in order to achieve our purpose.

In all our institutions for girls and women, full development from the beginning for the entire range of the possibilities of women is our goal.

We know that a country where half of the population is female but has not fully developed its capacities cannot move forward. That is why this is the constant task of our women, a task which in Chile is understood and supported by the male element, the other 50 per cent of the population which constitutes the moving force behind the advance of progress in the world.

The word "generosity" implies a wealth of feelings; it is a giving of oneself with total love without thought for the consequences to oneself; it is the commitment to the fatherland that our women have undertaken, offering their most precious gifts, feminine, strong and real, without setting any limits but

looking toward a horizon open to positive achievements which will reflect the image of women in complete dedication to work for the good of their compatriots and the task of raising the seat which our fatherland should occupy in the concert of nations to its rightful dignity.

In building the edifice of the family, the human couple must be the pillars upon which it rests and those pillars must provide strength, ability and responsibilities in equal measure so as to give the family a solid and balanced foundation providing the firmness needed to enable it to face the many storms of everyday life with fortitude and security in its powers.

This strong image of great spiritual solidity in which the effort of man and woman is joined is the image that we would like our fatherland to have and that is what we women are fighting for.
